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An Aristocratic Surgeon of Mughal India: Muqarrab Khān

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Physicians did not lack recognition in the Mughal Empire, and their names are often listed in Mughal histories along with those of the learned and men of letters of the time.¹ In spite of this they were not regarded as part of the Mughal ruling aristocracy. It was therefore remarkable that Muqarrab Khān, a surgeon and physician, who was known for his skill in treating elephants as much as for treating men, should have attained the high *manṣab* of 5,000 *zāt* and 5,000 *sawār*, and been appointed governor of three provinces during Jahāngīr's reign.

The career of Shaikh Hasan Hassū, who was given the title Muqarrab Khān by Jahāngīr,² was quite eventful. He belonged to a family of *shaikhzādas*, that is of Indian Muslims.³ He is first noticed when he assisted his father Bhīna (or Bahā, as in the *Tuzūk*), a surgeon of some repute,⁴ in bleeding Akbar, when the emperor was afflicted with some injury in 1595–6.⁵

¹ Abū'l Fazl, *Ā'in-i Akbari*, I, ed. Blochmann, Calcutta, 1867–77, p. 543; Abdul Hamīd Lāhorī, *Bādshāhnāma*, ed., I, pt. i, p. 350 and *passim*.

² *Tuzūk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Ghazipur and Aligarh, 1863–4, p. 12; Khwāja Ni'matullah, *Tārīkh-i Khān Jahānī*, Dhaka, p. 667. It appears that Muqarrab Khān was popularly known as Abū'l Hasan. See J. J. Modi, *Dastur Kaikobad Mahyar's Petition and Laudatory Poem addressed to Jahangir and Shahjahan*, Bombay, 1930, verse 152, p. 13.

³ The only reference to him in the *Zakhīrat-ul Khwānīn* is that his grandfather hailed from Panipat. From Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ's *Tabaqāt-i Shāhjahānī* (MS Department of History, AMU, f. 570) we learn, however, that he was from Sirhind.

⁴ Abū'l Fazl mentions him in his list of physicians (*Ā'in*, I, p. 543).

⁵ Abū'l Fazl, *Akbarnāma*, ed. Beveridge, III, pp. 1061–2; Mu'tamid Khān, *Iqbāl-nāma-i Jahāngīrī*, Nawal Kishore, 1870, II, p. 446.

Muqarrab Khān attained much greater recognition with the accession of Jahāngīr. In the very first year of the reign he was granted the title by which he is known, and was deputed to accompany Dāniyāl's children coming to the Court from Burhānpūr.⁶

In 1607 he was sent in an embassy to Goa.⁷ Of this embassy, which proved abortive, Guerreiro says:

The ambassador [Muqarrab Khān] was awaited at Goa by the Viceroy, Ruy Lourenço de Tauoro, who had also arrived, and had written to say that he might now come to Goa with all security. At the same time orders were given for one of our ships to bring him. But as he was at this time recalled by the King, he was unable to come. His duties as the Mogol's ambassador were therefore carried out by Fr. Pinheiro, who shared his office.⁸

It seems that at the time of his deputation to Goa in 1607, Muqarrab Khān was holding some position at Cambay.⁹ It was during this mission that he tried to win over the Jesuits by expressing his love for their faith—he is alleged to have shown reverence to a painting of Jesus and Mary at Surat.¹⁰ But it was perhaps more an aesthetic reaction than faith in Christ's divinity that occasioned his admiration. Muqarrab Khān also allowed the Jesuit father, Pinheiro, to treat his adopted son—later known as Masīh-i Kairānawī—with Christian relics.¹¹

Some time before 1611, Muqarrab Khān had been appointed Governor (presumably *Mutaṣaddi*) of Cambay and then of Surat.¹²

⁶ *Tuzūk*, I, 12.

⁷ Account of Father Fernão Guerreiro, based on Father Pinheiro's letter written in November 1609. As for the object of this embassy, Guerreiro writes: 'The embassy had for its object nothing more than the maintenance of friendly relations with the (Portuguese) State, while the Ambassador (Muqarrab Khān) was instructed to bring back with him any rare and curious object he could procure in India for the Portuguese' (*Jahangir and the Jesuits, with an Account of The Travels of Benedict Goes and the Mission to Pegu and the Relations of Father Fernao Guerreiro, S.J.*, tr. C. H. Payne, London, 1930, pt. I, p. 44). Also see H. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, London, 1932, p. 77.

⁸ Payne (tr.), *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, pt. I, pp. 86–7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78: 'and so deeply was he impressed with the majority visible in their figures, that he said that it would be better not to have lived at all than to have lived without seeing so marvellous a work.'

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹² *Tuzūk*, I, p. 80; *Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East*, ed. W. Foster, I, pp. 23, 26, 33, 138 and 140. In 1607 or even earlier, his income was 'fifty thousand *pardaos*, besides a hundred and fifty thousand which he received from the King' (Payne (tr.), *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, I, p. 77).

From there he is reported to have sent European rareties as gifts to the Emperor.¹³ Since the English had now arrived, he established contact with them as well. The English complained that he was demanding gifts for which he did not pay or else procured them at very low prices;¹⁴ a complaint which seems to have persisted till the very end.¹⁵ At one time the English Factors reported:

As you have seen the Nabob [Muqarrab Khān] by the hand of one man to buy all the trifles amongst the common people of the ships so you shall do well to remember to give advice that no man bring any of their things to land, which will procure great troubles and delays to the main business...¹⁶

It seems that in the beginning Muqarrab Khān was more inclined towards the Portuguese. Moreover, Fr. Pinheiro, a Jesuit Father, had dealt skilfully with him, bribing him in such a manner that he might help the Portuguese as against the English.¹⁷ Muqarrab Khān, after having initially been friendly towards the English agent William Hawkins in 1609, changed in manner. But much as he wanted to hinder him, he could not, as Hawkins claimed to possess a letter from the English King to the Great Mughal.¹⁸ It is alleged that in league with the Jesuits, Muqarrab Khān even tried to have Hawkins poisoned or killed on the way, but the attempt proved abortive.¹⁹ At Agra Jahāngīr accorded some favour to Hawkins and

¹³ *Tuzūk*, I, p. 80; see also Jourdain, *Journal*, 1608–17, ed. Foster, Hakluyt Society, 2nd Series, no. XVI, Cambridge, 1905, pp. 180–2.

¹⁴ Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrims or Hakluytus Posthumus*, reprint Glasgow, 1905, IV, pp. 21, 23 and 24; *Letters Received*, I, pp. 23–4 and 33; *ibid.*, II, pp. 135 and 138.

¹⁵ The last entry in *English Factories in India 1624–29* (ed. Foster, p. 271) also ends with a complaint of delay in payment. See also *ibid.*, pp. 151, 241.

¹⁶ *Letters Received*, III, p. 31.

¹⁷ Account of Fr. Guerreiro in Payne (tr.), *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, pp. 85–6; also see Hawkins in *Early Travels in India*, ed. Foster, p. 84.

¹⁸ Hawkins writes that this reluctance initially stemmed from the non-payment for goods acquired by Muqarrab Khān from the English. It was further strengthened by Portuguese scheming; Muqarrab Khān had agreed to grant a licence to Hawkins to proceed towards Agra, but 'the Father (Pinheiro) put into Mocreb Chan his head, that it was not good to let me passe: for that I would complaine of him unto the King. Thus he plotted with Mocreb Chan to overthrow my journey, which he could not doe, because I came from a King: but he said, that he would not let me have any force to goe with me' (*Purchas*, III, p. 9.)

¹⁹ *Purchas*, III, pp. 9–10; The Portuguese too report a misfortune which befell the English (Payne (tr.), *Jahāngīr and the Jesuits*, p. 86). This was but wishful thinking on the part of the Jesuits when they talked of Hawkins slaughtered by robbers on the way to Agra.

even made him a 'captain of four hundred horse'.²⁰ Hawkins felt that Muqarrab Khān's machinations pursued him even at Agra.²¹

In March 1610 Muqarrab Khān himself arrived at the Court from Gujarat. But soon after, he fell from grace owing to a serious accusation being brought against him of having kidnapped a *baniya* girl and presented her to one of his attendants.²² His *manṣab* was reduced to half.²³ There is unfortunately no information about his actual *manṣab* before reduction. Muqarrab Khān did not however remain under a cloud for long and seems to have been restored to the Emperor's confidence soon afterwards. Hawkins now tried to press him to clear his previous debts. But in the process he seems to have annoyed Khwāja 'Abul Hasan 'the Chiefe Vizier', who, along with Muqarrab Khān, effectively obstructed Hawkins. Hawkins thought that Jahāngīr's decision to withdraw the privileges offered to the English was due to this intrigue.²⁴

It was only after a war had ensued between the Portuguese and the Mughals that Muqarrab Khān began to seek the friendship of the English. He was pleased when he heard that the English had sunk a Portuguese ship and damaged another.²⁵ Sir Henry Middleton and Nicholas Downton inform us that in late 1611, Muqarrab Khān, as Governor of Cambay, came to visit Middleton in his ship anchored off Swāly, near Surat, and stayed there for a night. He even promised the English some concessions, though he was unable to keep his word. He was presented a letter from King James I which pleased him very much, and promised Middleton that he would allow the setting up of a factory.²⁶ In return he asked for a treaty and assurance of English aid in any fighting with the Portuguese.²⁷ The Portuguese, not surprisingly, resented these

²⁰ *Purchas*, III, p. 14.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18; Jāhangīr too mentions this incident and puts the blame for the girl's death on one of Muqarrab Khān's servants, for which he 'had him put to death, and reduced Muqarrab Khān's *manṣab* by one half...' (*Tuzūk*, p. 83).

²³ *Tuzūk*, p. 83.

²⁴ *Purchas*, III, pp. 19–20. Muqarrab Khān had written a letter to his Emperor against the English merchants.

²⁵ *Letters Received*, I, p. 138; III, p. 64.

²⁶ Account of Sir H. Middleton in *Purchas*, III, p. 179; see also Jourdain, *Journal*, 1608–17 pp. 180–2.

²⁷ *Purchas*, IV, p. 219: 'that if I [Nicholas Downton] would assist them [the Mughals] against the Portugals, the Nabob would do us all the favour that in his power lyeth....' See also *Purchas*, IV, pp. 220, 222 and 258.

negotiations and warned Muqarrab Khān to desist,²⁸ at which he rapidly changed his mind. On 27 January 1612 he reiterated his offer to help the English to establish a factory, but within two or three days he asked them to leave the port.²⁹ From Middleton's letter dated 18 May 1612, addressed to the Mughal Emperor, one can judge the annoyance the English factors now felt at Muqarrab Khān and his 'unjust dealing'.³⁰

Muqarrab Khān seems to have gone to Goa, some time in early 1612, to buy paintings for the Emperor. In April 1612 Jahāngīr mentions his return.³¹ The English factors too mention his visit to Goā at this time.³² He was a suitable choice for the mission, since he once again succeeded in persuading the Portuguese that he was attracted to their religion. Indeed he was reported to have embraced Catholicism. Nicholas Withington, in one of his despatches of 17 November 1613, says that:

After this Mocrobacann proceeded on his journey for Goa, where (as the Portingals say and swear) he according to his desire was christened, saying he felt his conscience very light and jocund after his baptism.³³

Maclagan too refers to this 'conversion' but says that 'the new convert was an "imperfect Christian" and the authorities at Goa treated him with some circumspection'.³⁴ He also refers to a letter which had been written by Muqarrab Khān on 3 April 1615 wherein the name 'Jesu' was superscribed.³⁵

On his return from the mission to Goa Muqarrab Khān brought rareties (paintings?) which highly pleased Jahāngīr.³⁶ He seems by now to have been completely exonerated from the charges and was

²⁸ *Letters Received*, I, pp. 175–6; *Purchas*, III, p. 271.

²⁹ *Purchas*, III, pp. 184–5, also pp. 265–6.

³⁰ Jourdain, *Journal*, 1608–17, pp. 218–24.

³¹ *Tuzūk*, pp. 104–5.

³² *Letters Received*, III, p. 298 n.

³³ *Ibid.* The story of conversion is repeated by Bocarro.

³⁴ H. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, London, 1932, p. 78.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Tuzūk*, pp. 104–5: 'According to orders he went with diligence to Goa, and remaining there for some time, took at the price the Franks asked for them the rareties he met with at the port, without looking at the face of money at all. When he returned from the aforesaid port to the court, he produced before me one by one the things he had brought.'

soon appointed Governor of the *ṣūba* of Delhi.³⁷ It was in the same year that he was given very rapid promotions. In the 7th Regnal Year, he was granted three enhancements in rank, raising his *manṣab* from 2,000/1,000 to 2,500/1,500,³⁸ and then to 3,000/2,000.³⁹ He was also honoured with the grant of standard and kettledrums.⁴⁰

One of the most important incidents in the life of Muqarrab Khān also occurred in 1612 during his tenure at *ṣūba* Delhi. Soon after his appointment we find him treating the Emperor, who was reportedly suffering from *khūn-pārā* (congestion of blood). Upon his physicians' advice, Jahāngīr was bled, and about a *ser* (approx. 1¼lb avdp) of blood taken from his left arm. The operation was successfully carried out by Muqarrab Khān.⁴¹

Muqarrab Khān thus remained a great favourite of his Emperor, who always treated him generously and easily forgave his faults. Jahāngīr's attitude towards him is illustrated by an incident which took place in 1613 when the Portuguese organized a raid on the port of Surat and sacked four ships.⁴² Muqarrab Khān who held Surat in his charge (*havāla*), as customer or *Mutaṣaddī* was consoled by Jahāngīr by the award of a horse, elephant and robe of honour. He was then apparently at the Court.⁴³

In retaliation for the Portuguese action Muqarrab Khān got St Xavier and other Jesuits arrested at Surat in 1614, and closed their churches.⁴⁴

In spite of this hostility between Muqarrab Khān and the Portuguese, the English continued to bear a grudge against him since he was still not letting them have direct access to the

³⁷ *Tuzūk*, p. 109. Incidentally this is one of the few instances when Jahāngīr mentions him without compliments as 'my closest friend', 'my confidant'.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 112. On p. 105 of *Tuzūk*, Jahāngīr records his *manṣab* as 3000/2000, but this seems to be a slip since on the very next page, while recording actual promotions, he records it correctly as 2000/1000.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁴³ *Ibid.* This shows that Muqarrab Khān was at Agra and not at Surat. This is confirmed by *Letters Received*, I, pp. 277–81. It was in 1614 that Muqarrab Khān was ordered to proceed to Surat. Kerridge says that Muqarrab Khān was also the governor of Cambay at this time. See *Letters Received*, II, pp. 103–4.

⁴⁴ *Letters Received*, II, pp. 96, 107.

Emperor.⁴⁵ When he heard of the growing hostility between the English and the Portuguese (in 1614–15), he seems to have become friendlier towards the English;⁴⁶ he naturally believed that a conflict between the two European powers could only benefit the Mughals.⁴⁷ In any case he was forced to side with the English through his fear of Portuguese naval raids.⁴⁸ Jahāngīr gave him a free hand to deal with the Europeans, even forwarding James I's letter to him to reply to on the Emperor's behalf.⁴⁹ The English factors, aware of his influence with the Emperor,⁵⁰ perhaps expected too much from him, and therefore felt that he was not really supporting them.⁵¹ They even complain of the high rates that he was charging (5 instead of 3½ per cent) as customs.⁵² We find that in 1615, it was with some reluctance that he let the English carry their gifts directly to Jahāngīr.⁵³

This permission and the fact that he was passing on to them information against the Portuguese modified somewhat the English

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 176; III, pp. 37, 39, etc.; 'Master Aldworth strived to persuade me [Nich. Downton] that Mocrib Chan the Nabob was our friend, and that now was the best time by reason of their Warres (with Portugals) for us to obtaine good trade and all Privileges that in reason we could demand.... I liking all their hopefull words, yet ever wishing some other in his place, and that Mocrib Chan had beene further away, of whom I rested still in doubt, that we should have no free trade but according to his accustomed manner...' (*Purchas*, IV, pp. 217–18).

⁴⁶ *Purchas*, IV, pp. 224–5.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 225–6.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 243; 'The cause of their request [to the English to stay on at Surat], was their feare lest the Vice-Roy [of the Portuguese] after my (Downton's) departure should come against Surat with all his forces.' Thomas Elkington also writes of Muqarrab Khān's anxiety to befriend the English. Ibid.

⁴⁹ *Letters Received*, II, p. 104: 'and though I urged that Mocrob Chan could give no answer to our king's letter, yet prevailed nothing....'

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 103–4, 157, 185; III, p. 23, points out that the king was using him as an instrument against the English.

⁵¹ Ibid., II, pp. 138, 149, 151, 178, 239–40; III, pp. 5, 22, 23, 37, 39, 43 and 44.

⁵² Ibid., p. 5.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 22. English suspicions regarding Muqarrab Khān and the Portuguese appear to be justified in the light of a Treaty of Peace signed by Muqarrab Khān and the Portuguese Gocalo Pinto da Fonseca on 7 June 1615, which declared that the Mughals and the Portuguese 'will not engage in any trade' with English and Dutch merchants, nor would they be sheltered in ports, or supplied with provisions. See *Indian Historical Records Commission*, Vol. IX, pp. 78–80 and S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Mughal Documents (1526–1627)*, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 97–8.

attitude towards him.⁵⁴ The general complaint against him for non-payment for gifts nevertheless continued to the very end.⁵⁵

Jahāngīr's favours, however, continued. Muqarrab Khān was given further *manṣab* enhancements: in 1616 he was promoted to the rank of 5,000/2,500.⁵⁶ In 1617 his rank was raised again to 5,000/5,000,⁵⁷ and he was appointed *sūbahdār* of Gujarat.⁵⁸ Thus within a short span Muqarrab Khān had attained the very prestigious rank of 5,000/5,000 which only a few could reach. Moreover, he was given charge of one of the important *ṣūbas* of the Mughal Empire, which he held for a year or two.

Muqarrab Khān's appointment as Governor of Gujarat was criticised by his contemporaries. Khān-i 'Āzam is reported by the English factors to have considered it unsuitable;⁵⁹ this criticism is also voiced by Lāhorī, who says that Jahāngīr was unable to recognize talent and was indiscreet in selecting people.⁶⁰

After his term as Governor of Gujarat, Muqarrab Khān was sent to Bihar in 1618,⁶¹ though initially he appeared reluctant to go there. He delayed going to Patna and came to the Court,⁶² perhaps to plead against his transfer; but it was not revoked and he ultimately took up his post there.

⁵⁴ *Letters Received*, II, pp. 51–2, 325; Nicholas Downton: 'The twelfth [February, 1615] Lacandas came downe, informing me from the Nabob (he being so assured by the Jesuits, with whom he always kept faire weather for his better securitie, if we should be put to the worse) that there were sixe or eight [Portuguese] Frigates gone to the Northwards, with four or five Fireboats to be let drive among us in the night; and therefore wished carefully to looke out, for that it should be when we should least expect. I allowed his kindnesse, was glad of his carefull regard....' *Purchas*, IV, p. 241; see also pp. 262–3.

⁵⁵ *English Factories*, 1624–29, pp. 151, 241 and 271.

⁵⁶ *Tuzūk*, p. 149.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; also Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615–19*, ed. Foster, London, 1926, p. 424.

⁵⁹ *English Factories*, 1622–23, p. 282.

⁶⁰ Abdul Hamīd Lāhorī, *Bādshāhnāma*, ed. K. Ahmad and A. Rahim, A.S.B., Calcutta, 1867, Vol. I, pt. i, p. 159.

⁶¹ *Tuzūk*, p. 244; Shāh Nawāz Khān, *Ma'āsir-ul Umara*, ed. Molvi Ashraf Ali, Vol. III, pt. i, p. 381; *English Factories*, 1618–21, p. 9, note Muqarrab Khān as 'our then governor Muckrob Chan', implying that by February he had been transferred.

⁶² 'Before this, an order had been given that Muqarrab Khān, having been appointed to Bihar, should hasten off there. He came to the court in order to pay his respects before he repaired to his destination....' *Tuzūk*, p. 271.

At Patna Muqarrab Khān is reported to have helped construct some Jesuit churches and to have kept a priest, maintaining his links with the Portuguese and so enriching himself.⁶³

It was during this time that the Emperor visited Kairānā, where Muqarrab Khān had established a garden which was reputed for the variety of fruits grown there. Jahāngīr visited this garden in 1619, when he went there with the Imperial ladies.⁶⁴ He seems to have been so impressed that in 1620 he made another entry in his Memoirs of having gone to Kairānā a second time.⁶⁵

Muqarrab Khān remained in Bihar till 1622 when he was given the Governorship of the province of Agra for one year.⁶⁶ Robert Hughes, an English factor at Patna, while recording the replacement of Muqarrab Khān from Bihar by Sultān Pervez, says that Muqarrab Khān upon the end of his term despatched Rs 300,000 to Agra by means of bills—an amount sufficiently large to disturb the exchange between the two places.⁶⁷

We have little information about Muqarrab Khān after 1623 in the Persian sources. According to the *Ma'āsiru-l Umara* he was now appointed second *bakhshi* of the Empire.⁶⁸ Factory Records show that he also held charge of the port of Surat in that year.⁶⁹

In 1628 Muqarrab Khān was retired from active service by Shāhjahān, obviously because of the trust he had enjoyed at his

⁶³ Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, pp. 78–9. Maclagan quotes Father Simon Figueredo's letter of 20 December 1620, where the Father says that Muqarrab Khān kept a priest 'with no other object than that of attracting Portuguese trade, from which he could enrich himself.' But this in no way hindered his friendship with the English. For we are informed that he even helped the English factor Hughes to find a house on rent in the heart of the city 'on a rent of Rs 6/12 per month' (N. N. Ray, *The Annals of the Early English Settlement in Bihar*, Calcutta, 1927, p. 24.)

⁶⁴ 'Truly it is a very fine and enjoyable garden' (*Tuzūk*, p. 283).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 375; Mu'tamad Khān, *Iqbāl-nāma-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Abdul Hai and Ahmad Ali, Calcutta, 1865, Vol. III, p. 178; *Ma'āsir-ul Umara*, III, p. 381. Jahāngīr in *Tuzūk* (p. 394) only mentions that 'Having conferred on Muqarrab Khān, who is one of the old officials, the government and administration of Agra, I gave him his leave.'

⁶⁷ *English Factories, 1618–21*, pp. 236, 248. On p. 248, Hughes writes to the President and Council at Surat: 'Money received from Agra and invested. Accounts cleared with Muqarrab Khān....'

⁶⁸ 'Was appointed as the Second *Bakhshi* of the Empire and thus came closer to Jahāngīr' (*Ma'āsir-ul Umara*, III, p. 381).

⁶⁹ 'The reporte here is that the King hath given the government of Surrat to Mocrob Chaun' (*English Factories, 1622–23*, p. 282).

father's court.⁷⁰ Farīd Bhakkari informs us that he spent the rest of his time in tending his gardens and orchards.⁷¹ The main source of income for him was from his *watan* Kairānā, which was granted to him by Shāhjahān as *suyūrghāl*. The income from this place, we are told, amounted to one lakh of rupees.⁷² In 1635 he is also mentioned as the *tuyūldār* (*jāgīrdār*) of Sambhal by Lāhorī.⁷³

Muqarrab Khān was by hereditary profession a surgeon, and it was owing to this that he seems to have won Jahāngīr's favour initially. Even after he had attained high *manṣabs*, he continued to pursue this profession. Muqarrab Khān's skill in the field of medicine was so great that he was praised by Farīd Bhakkari as the Avicenna and Galen of the age.⁷⁴ This was of course exaggerated praise, but even Lāhorī admits that Muqarrab Khān was incomparable in the field of surgery (*jarrābī*).⁷⁵ He is also reputed to have been interested in treating elephants' disorders.⁷⁶ Two of his works, *Ā'in-i Āshkār* and *Ā'in-us Shifa*, based on the *Tibb-i Sikandari*, survive to this day. The first relates to symptoms and diseases,⁷⁷ while the second deals with drugs, their preparation, properties, temperament, degrees of efficacy and tested cures.⁷⁸

Muqarrab Khān's activities were not confined to the administrative, diplomatic and medical fields alone. He seems to have taken much interest in horticulture, hunting, architecture and collecting all kinds of curiosities and rareties.

Thus in 1614–15 when he presented a list of items which he wanted to procure for the Emperor to the English factors he included 'pictures in cloth', canines of several varieties like 'mastiffs, greyhounds, spaniels and other small dogs'.⁷⁹ We also know that a

⁷⁰ Lāhorī, I, i, p. 159. The prejudices of contemporaries against him are well reflected through Lāhorī's words. See also Shaikh Farīd Bhakkari, *Zakhīratul Khawānīn*, ed. Moinul Haq, Karachi, 1970, II, pp. 271–3; *Ma'āsir-ul Umara*, III, p. 381.

⁷¹ *Zakhīratul Khawānīn*, II, pp. 271–3; *Ma'āsir-ul Umara*, III, p. 381.

⁷² Lāhorī, I, ii, p. 350.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 76.

⁷⁴ *Zakhīratul Khawānīn*, II, pp. 271–2; *Ma'āsir-ul Umara*, III, p. 380.

⁷⁵ Lāhorī, I, ii, p. 350; see also Muhammad Sādiq, *Tabaqāt-i Shāhjahānī*, MS Maulana Azad Library, ff. 570–71.

⁷⁶ Lāhorī, I, ii, p. 350.

⁷⁷ MS Bankipur Library, Patna.

⁷⁸ MS Central State Library, Hyderabad; cf. A. Rahman, M. A. Alvi et al. (ed.), *Science and Technology in Medieval India—a Bibliography of Source Materials in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian*, New Delhi, 1982.

⁷⁹ *Letters Received*, II, p. 173; also, Memorandum of Downton in *The Voyage of Nicholas Downton to the East Indies, 1614–15*, p. 187.

rare bird, the Turkey-cock (*meleagris galhparro*) which was brought by the Portuguese from Goa was presented to the Emperor by Muqarrab Khān in 1612.⁸⁰ Jahāngīr also notes that in 1616 Muqarrab Khān had made a present to him of a small African elephant which greatly pleased the Emperor.⁸¹ The ability to please the King in this manner stood him so well that his portrait adorned the wall of the Dīwānkhāna in Lahore along with the portraits of other great nobles like Khān-i Jahān, Sharīf Khān, Mahābat Khān and others.⁸²

It appears that Muqarrab Khān was quite successful as a merchant as well. Apart from procuring gifts for the Emperor, he carried on private trade. His commercial links with both Portuguese and English merchants are time and again alluded to in the Factory Records. In 1611, when he visited an English ship along with Khwāja Nizām, a prominent merchant of Gujarat, he is alleged to have 'busied himselfe in buying of Knives, Glasses or any other toyes he found'.⁸³ Middleton also tells us of the commercial transactions which he conducted along with Muqarrab Khān and Khwāja Nizām.

I went to him to his tent, where after friendly salutation and complements past, wee fell to treat of businesse; and agreed for prices of all our Lead, Quick-silver, and Vermilion, and for their goods likewise in lieu thereof.⁸⁴

This Khwāja Nizām who appears to have been a business partner of Muqarrab Khān was reportedly such an influential merchant that no other merchant dared to trade with the English 'without his prevention and leave'; and he was thus able to dictate terms to the English merchants.⁸⁵

Probably it was due to the commercial acumen of Muqarrab Khān that all the business concerning the English factors in Gujarat was handed over by the Emperor to him:

⁸⁰ *Tuzūk*, pp. 104–5; also see M. A. Alvi and A. Rahman, *Jahangir, the Naturalist*, New Delhi, 1968, pp. 63–4; and A. Jan Qaisar, *The Indian Response to European Technology*, (A.D. 1498–1707), New Delhi, 1982, p. 152.

⁸¹ *Tuzūk*, p. 158.

⁸² Narrative of William Finch as given in *Purchas*, IV, p. 54.

⁸³ *Purchas*, III, pp. 179 and 262–3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 180 and 265–6. Apart from these commodities, we find Muqarrab Khān trading in various kinds of cloth. See, for example, *Purchas*, IV, pp. 224–5.

⁸⁵ *Purchas*, III, pp. 180–1; IV, pp. 219–20.

...All business concerning us and our trade is referred unto him, and as he adviseth so things here will pass, and what he granteth there will be confirmed here....⁸⁶

In his commercial transactions, Muqarrab Khān made full use of his position; we find him forcing the English to sell their goods at lower prices.⁸⁷ Further, it appears that he owned some ships and carried on private trade.⁸⁸ We are told that among his contemporaries, Muqarrab Khān 'hath more adventures at sea than any of this country.'⁸⁹

Muqarrab Khān was also interested in European technology. In 1612, he asked the English factors to provide him a model of a 'Chaine-Pumpe', which, it seems, was presented to him.⁹⁰ He had even wanted to 'experience' the use of window panes, a wish which unfortunately could not be fulfilled by the English factors due to the non-availability of a glacier.⁹¹ Then in 1621 he is said to have purchased a looking-glass at the high price of Rs 300.⁹²

Muqarrab Khān also emulated European fashions in dress. In 1615 he asked to be presented with an English suit which was given to him at Surat. The English suspected that his desire to have this suit was just to show off to the women of his harem.⁹³ The *Tuzūk* records that he also received a hat from the Europeans.⁹⁴

Muqarrab Khān was known for his love of orchards and gardens. He had established his family seat at Kairānā, a *pargana* in *sarkār* Sahāranpūr, Muḏaffarnagar district, to which he ultimately retired. It is situated partly in the fertile low-lying areas of the Jumna and partly on a sloping bank.⁹⁵ It was here that Muqarrab

⁸⁶ *Letters Received*, II, p. 157.

⁸⁷ See, for example, *Purchas*, IV, pp. 21, 23, 24; *Letters Received*, II, p. 138.

⁸⁸ *Purchas*, III, p. 176; IV, pp. 224–5; *English Factories*, 1618–21, p. 19.

⁸⁹ *Letters Received*, I, p. 307; *Purchas*, III, p. 2.

⁹⁰ *Purchas*, III, pp. 263–4; A. Jan Qaisar, 'Merchant Shipping in India during the 17th Century', *IESHR*, V, no. 2, June 1968, p. 198, n. 1.

⁹¹ *English Factories*, 1618–21, p. 11.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 246. On p. 327, there is a reference to a 'looking-glasse' sold. We are however not told of the identity of the buyer.

⁹³ Farewell's account in *Voyage of Downton*, p. 150.

⁹⁴ *Tuzūk*, p. 115.

⁹⁵ Edwin T. Atkinson, *Statistical Description and Historical Account of the North-Western Provinces of India*, III, pt. ii, Allahabad, 1876, p. 685; H. R. Nevill, *Muzaffarnagar, A Gazetteer, being Volume III of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Allahabad, 1903, pp. 267–8.

Khān laid out a complex of buildings with a very large orchard, of which the *barā'darī* and tank survive.⁹⁶ He also built a *dargāh* over the tomb of Shāh Sharaf Bū'Alī Qalandar in *Panipat*, according to his contemporary Farīd Bhakkari.⁹⁷

His gardens at Kairānā where he planted fruits, especially mangoes, brought from all parts of the country became famous.⁹⁸ The mangoes from his orchards could be got even two months after the mango season was over in India.⁹⁹ Unfortunately we do not know about the varieties of mangoes or other fruits that he planted, nor whether he made use of grafting techniques, which his friends the Portuguese had introduced to produce the first grafted mango, the Alfonso. However, the trees in his orchards continued to fruit well after the mango season was over elsewhere.

As Governor of Gujarat, Muqarrab Khān renovated old buildings and built *jharokas* at Ahmadabad.¹⁰⁰

In his last years Muqarrab Khān spent his life peaceably in his harem of 1,000 women, tending the mausoleum of Shāh Sharaf Bū Qalandar.¹⁰¹ He died aged about 90 in AH 1056/AD 1646.¹⁰²

Muqarrab Khān left behind three sons and a daughter. One of the sons, Rizqullah, is known to have continued in his father's profession of physician and attained the rank of 800 during Shāhjahan's reign.¹⁰³ In 1649 a sum of Rs 1,000 was also fixed in his name by the Emperor.¹⁰⁴ A brother, Shaikh 'Abdur Rahīm, had acted as his *nā'ib* when Muqarrab Khān was at Cambay in 1611.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁶ Atkinson, *North-Western Provinces*, p. 685; Nevill, *Muzaffarnagar*, p. 268; A. Fuhrer, *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Varanasi, 1969, p. 13.

⁹⁷ *Zakhīratul Khawānīn*, II, p. 272.

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 271–3; *Ma'āsir-ul Umara*, III, pp. 381–2. According to the *Tājul Ma'āsir*, the mangoes of Kairānā were long celebrated in Delhi (cf. Atkinson, *North-Western Provinces*, p. 686; Nevill, *Muzaffarnagar*, p. 268).

⁹⁹ *Tuzūk*, p. 283.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 162.

¹⁰¹ Rizqullah built this saint's tomb some eight years before Muqarrab Khān's death. See Nevill, *Muzaffarnagar*, p. 267.

¹⁰² *Lāhorī*, II, ii, p. 613. Though the author of *Tabaqāt-i Shāhjahanī* (f. 570) gives AH 1050/AD 1640 as the year of his death.

¹⁰³ *Ma'āsir-ul Umara*, III, p. 382. Aurangzeb gave him the title Khān, and he ultimately died in AD 1668. See Atkinson, *North-Western Provinces*, p. 589.

¹⁰⁴ Muhammad Wāris, *Bādshāhnāma*, MS Rampur (transcript, Department of History Library, AMU), I, p. 71.

¹⁰⁵ Jourdain, *Journal*, 1608–1617, p. 173; *Lāhorī*, I, ii, p. 351; *Purchas*, III, p. 3.

‘Abdur Rahīm’s son, Shaikh Qāsim, was an expert surgeon, having been tutored by Muqarrab Khān himself. He was also well-versed in mathematics.¹⁰⁶ Of his other relatives, mention is made of a son-in-law who is said to have been ‘a very ingenious young man’, helping Muqarrab Khān in his diplomatic and administrative missions.¹⁰⁷

Muqarrab Khān’s was a colourful life: he was physician, nobleman, man of culture, diplomat, with many of the virtues and vices of the Mughal nobility. His career is representative of Jahāngīr’s policy of bringing in new elements into the nobility: the *Shaikhzādas* (Indian Muslims) were those who particularly benefited from his favours.¹⁰⁸ But Muqarrab Khān possessed certain qualities that Jahāngīr particularly liked: he was accomplished, cultured, perhaps a man of skill and taste—and perhaps a witty conversationalist. Men like Muqarrab Khān could not as easily claim the attention of a cold and calculating intellect like that of Shāhjahān’s.

¹⁰⁶ Lāhori, I, ii, pp. 350–1.

¹⁰⁷ *Purchas*, IV, p. 245.

¹⁰⁸ See M. Athar Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire*, Delhi, 1985, pp. xx–xxi.